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THE TWO PRAGMATISMS.*

BY VERNON LEE.

“ . . . The first part of the essay, however, is occupied with showing that, if Truth consists in satisfaction, it cannot be any *actual* satisfaction, but must be the satisfaction which *would* ultimately be found if the inquiry were pushed to its ultimate and indefeasible issue. This, I beg to point out, is a very different position from that of Mr. Schiller and the pragmatists of to-day . . . Their avowedly undefinable position, if it be not capable of logical characterization, seems to me to be characterized by an angry hatred of strict logic, and even some disposition to rate any exact thought which interferes with their doctrines as all humbug. . . It seems to me a pity they should allow a philosophy so instinct with life to become infected with seeds of death in such notions as that of the unreality of all ideas of infinity and that of the mutability of truth, and in such confusions of thought as that of active willing (willing to control thought, to doubt, and to weigh reasons) with willing not to exert the will (willing to believe).”*

IN the following pages I shall try, in vulgar parlance, to show up what is nowadays being rather pressed upon our acceptance than offered for our inspection, under the ambiguous name of “Pragmatism.” I would therefore premise that I am by no means attacking all the ideas connected with the doctrine so called, nor even the bulk thereof. The peculiarity of Pragmatism is (as I hope to demonstrate) its tactics of advancing untenable propositions and falling back upon received ones; its shuffling the principle which is hard to accept in a handful of principles we have willingly accepted; its medium-like device (for only successive metaphors can illustrate habits so Protean) of slipping a hand out of the seemingly unbroken circle of concatenated thought, in order to produce all manner of new and desirable

* Charles S. Peirce, “Hibbert Journal,” Vol II, No. 1 (Oct., 1908), pages 111, 112.

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manifestations. And, for this reason, two-thirds of all that Pragmatists adduce is not only a re-statement—sometimes a really improved and enlarged re-statement—of their opponents' views, but embodies, most admirably stated, the very arguments those opponents have used against them. Indeed, as we shall see, the name of Pragmatism is now taken by a doctrine which the inventor of that name, the much-quoted and little-read Charles Sanders Peirce, forestalled only to denounce and demolish it.

The result of all this is that I wish to premise that I am attacking, not certain books, with two-thirds of whose contents I concur; still less certain writers from whose analytic talent (in the case of Mr. F. C. Schiller), from whose wide-sweeping genius (in the case of Professor W. James) I have derived so much advantage; least of all, the whole mass of doctrine labelled Pragmatism. I am attacking the views which put Pragmatism and Pragmatists in opposition to every other existing or conceivable philosophy. Or, rather, I am attacking a particular temperament which, imported into philosophy from wholly different fields of thought, tests truth by the standards of worldly practicality, of moral edification, and of religious sentiment, and thereby passes off as *true* what may be merely useful or inspiring delusions, merely practically serviceable, emotionally satisfying, or morally commendable, figments.

For, at the bottom of this kind of Pragmatism, which the more illustrious of its two promoters has associated with the expression "Will-to-believe"—at the bottom of Will-to-believe Pragmatism

* Professor James seems anxious to withdraw the expression "will-to-believe"—telling us ("Pragmatism," page 258) that he "unluckily" gave that name to an essay of which the critics (presumably the present writer in a "Fortnightly" article, reprinted in "Gospels of Anarchy") neglected the meaning in order to "pounce down on the title." Professor James, in the same place, now defines the subject of that essay as the "Right-to-Believe." "Right to believe," in plain English, usually means the existence of an intellectual alternative, *i. e.*: "In the face of So-and-so's evidence, I have the right to believe that what happened was this." Or else the absence of coercion by the State: "in this country, people have the right to believe as they choose": *i. e.*, differences of opinion are tolerated by the laws and customs. What Professor James argued for in that "Will-to-Believe" essay was the expediency, the occasional personal or moral advantage (exemplified by the courage of men who *believe* they can resist brigands, and the difference in our conduct due to religious belief) of accepting a hypothesis on other than intellectual grounds. Of these he wrote ("Will to Believe" page 9): "It is only our dead hypotheses that our willing nature is unable to bring to life again. . . . When I say 'willing nature,' I do not mean only such deliberate volitions as may have set up habits of belief that we cannot

there exist the psychological recognition of the inevitable presence, and the moralist's recognition of the occasional utility, of ideas, of opinions, of beliefs, which have not passed muster as *true*; the recognition that conduct is frequently based, and can sometimes be based with advantage, on what has not yet been tested as true, on what has not stood the test of truth, or what it is only wished should be true: viz., hypotheses, assumptions, misconceptions, misstatements, ambiguities, delusions and deceptions, a large proportion of which appears inevitable and perhaps indispensable in the life of the individual and of the race. The recognition and partial rehabilitation of this particular *not-true* element would show the superior acumen and superior sincerity of modern psychology and of modern ethics. Indeed, the progress of mental science and of utilitarian morals might culminate in some bolder Nietzsche proclaiming that truth is by no means the one thing requisite; that life has been rendered liveable, and morality itself floated and ballasted only by a fortunate output of figment.

But the "Will-to-Believe" Pragmatists are not bolder than Nietzsche. They are, on the contrary (as persons concerned with practicality should be), most remarkably attached to consequences, to workable systems and moral edification, and, for the benefit of these, they are most conspicuously careful of not coming into open collision with established prejudices. Now, while *truth* is by no means always necessary for advantageous and commendable practice, *untruth* or *non-truth* (under any of its varieties and synonyms furnished forth by the invaluable Roget) happens to be hampered by a tiresome and paradoxical peculiarity: its utility, nine times out of ten, depends upon hiding its own status and keeping up the credit of truth. A hope is not a hope, a fear is not a fear, once either is recognized as unfounded. An ambiguity is acceptable only if it is accepted in one of its ambiguous meanings. A delusion is delusive only so long as it is not known to be

now escape from. I mean all such factors of belief as fear and hope, prejudice and passion, imitation and partisanship, the circumsphere of our caste and set." This "willing nature" is, presumably, what Professor James referred to in his title "Will-to-Believe." And as the only change made in his subsequent books is the addition of "truth" as well as "belief" being dependent on such action of our "willing nature," I consider it fair to continue to designate his particular kind of Pragmatism by that ex-title of his, "Will-to-Believe," which I always take in the sense of "willing nature" as defined in the above passage.

one. A mistake can be built upon only so long as it is not suspected; and that consoling, encouraging, sometimes salutary and edifying figment which Ibsen christened "Vital Lie" can be life-enhancing or life-saving only when it is mistaken for a "Vital Truth."

The psychologists and moralists who, under the name of Pragmatists, are teaching the unavoidable presence and the practical benefits of a Will-to-Believe, have therefore veiled in judicious silence the disconcerting, the dangerous, the immoral fact that error, delusion and deception, when born of human needs and purposes, are occasionally efficacious in directing human decisions, in regulating human conduct and in making human life possible. The Pragmatists have refused to proclaim the *value of what is possibly not true*, and they have applied themselves to identifying *that which possesses value* with *truth* itself. This they have done by laying hold of a philosophical principle to which its earliest formulator, Mr. Charles Sanders Peirce, had given the name of "Pragmatism"; and by converting this principle, by endless moves revoked whenever detected, into the very thing which that proto-Pragmatist had invented Pragmatism to expose, disprove, confute and reduce forever to silence.

Let us follow this process, and in so doing obtain, not merely a knowledge of the chief peculiarities of Will-to-Believe Pragmatism, but an insight also into the "Will-to-Believe," the Pragmatic temper of mind and methods.

Professor James heralds his exposition of the pragmatic principle by telling us that, although only formulated by Mr. Peirce in the article entitled "How to Make Things Clear," it has been tacitly applied by the chief masters of British thought. He writes ("Varieties of Religious Experience," page 443):

"The guiding principle of British philosophy has in fact been that every difference must *make* a difference, every theoretical difference issue in a practical difference, and [that] the best method of discussing points of theory is to begin by ascertaining what practical difference would result from one alternative or the other being true. What is the particular truth in question known as? In what facts does it result? What is its cash-value in terms of particular experience? This is the characteristic English way of talking up a question. In this way, you remember, Locke talks up the question of personal identity: 'What you mean by it is just your chain of particular memories,' says he. *That is the only verifiable part of its significance.* All further ideas

about it, such as the oneness or the manyness of the spiritual substance on which it is based are, therefore, void of intelligible meaning, and propositions touching such ideas may be indifferently affirmed or denied. So Berkeley with his 'Matter.' The cash-value of matter is our physical sensations. That is *what it is known as*, all that we concretely verify of its conception. That, therefore, is the whole meaning of the term 'Matter'; any other pretended meaning is mere wind of words. Hume does the same thing with Causation. It is known as habitual antecedence, and as tending on our part to look for something definite to come. Apart from this *practical meaning* it has no significance whatever and books about it may be committed to the flames, says Hume."

Throughout this quotation we are shown the pragmatic method applied to ascertain the contents of a thought as a preliminary to testing that thought's truth. Professor James represents Locke and Berkeley and Hume as refusing to discuss severally Human Identity, Matter and Causation, except in so far as each of these words can be translated into terms of experience. Pragmatism is being employed, as the title of Mr. Peirce's famous article has it, "to make our ideas clear." The expression "practical difference" means in this connection *difference in the facts, in the experience, implied in the definition*: so when we say that the concept "match," implying the property of igniting, *cæteris paribus*, on friction with a specified surface, we verify whether a certain object is a match by rubbing it, *cæteris paribus*, against such a surface and watching whether it does or does not ignite. "Practical difference" refers to our real or imagined experiment, and the "cash-value in terms of experience" means the translation of an abstract statement into such inferred results as will by their happening or not happening declare whether that abstract statement is in the particular relation to objective reality which we designate as *truth*. The pragmatic method, as Professor James represents it as practised by these philosophical worthies, is based upon the recognition that the idea of a thing implies *qualities in the thing*, and that the *qualities of a thing* are a convenient name given to our prevision of *how that thing will, under specified circumstances, act*. The *practical difference* referred to is a difference in the mode of proceeding *of the thing discussed*; whether or not there ensues a *practical difference* in the action of ourselves or other folk, in the action of any except that *particular discussed thing*, is a totally separate question. The "Pragmatic Principle," as exemplified in Professor James's account of its

application by Locke, Berkeley and Hume, is, therefore, neither more nor less than the formula of scientific thinking, in contradistinction to such discussion of mere meaningless words as has been not unfairly reproached to "metaphysics." Thus understood, the "Pragmatic Principle" of Mr. Peirce, the formula of "cash-value in experience," would, no doubt, have interested the philosophers already mentioned, and those others, particularly the Mills and Bain, whom Professor James enumerates as having been pragmatical without knowing it. It would have interested also that most suggestive and genial man of science, the writer of William James's great "Psychology" and of so many invaluable *obiter dicta* even in the works intended to convert us to the Will-to-Believe. But when it comes to that particular Professor William James who has distinguished himself by the invention of the "Will-to-Believe," there seems no reason for his feeling particularly attracted, but rather (as we shall see later on) for his being particularly alienated, by the "Pragmatic Principle" and the "Cash-value in terms of experience" when interpreted in the above manner. For, the Pragmatic Principle and, more particularly, its Cash-value formulation are open also to another interpretation.

"Practical difference" may also be taken as meaning difference in the actions or habits of human beings, difference such as concerns practical persons in contradistinction to thinkers and investigators—for instance, educators and legislators, bent upon directly furthering prosperity and good behavior. Or, in other words, "practical difference" may be taken in the sense of implying such practice as is no longer the *test* of an opinion, but the *application* of an opinion once accepted, whether previously tested or not. The two meanings of "Practical Difference" are very near together, indeed in continual intercommunication, since everybody must admit that "practical difference," implying safe and desirable decisions about conduct, often follows upon the recognition of such "practical difference" between ideas as we have previously spoken of; nay, that though some of our *practical differences in conduct* happen to be due to our *not* knowing the *practical differences between what is and what is not true*, as when (so Professor James often urges) we *wager*, we *take risks* in which the gain is great and the loss trifling; yet the majority of our *practical* decisions are undoubtedly founded upon ourselves

or some one else having "made ideas clear" and tested suppositions by actual or supposed experiment. Indeed, the two meanings of "practical difference" are in such close proximity that the thought of even "the maker clear of our ideas," of even Mr. Peirce himself, has occasionally wavered between the two.

Since, in that very article "How to Make Our Ideas Clear," we come upon the following ambiguous developments of that ambiguous expression "practical":

"To develop its meaning we have . . . simply to determine: what habits it produces; for what a thing means simply is simply what habits it involves" (page 292).

"What then is belief? . . . it involves the establishment in our nature of a rule of action, or, say, for short, *a habit*" (page 291).

"The essence of belief is the establishment of a habit, and different beliefs are distinguished by the different modes of action to which they give rise" (page 291).

"There is no distinction of meaning so fine as to consist in anything but a possible difference of practice" (page 293).

It is this ambiguity in Mr. Peirce's words, if not in his thought, which probably commended the "Pragmatic Principle" to Professor James.

It is the object of the following pages,* not to discuss the intrinsic merits of the "Pragmatic Principle," but to expose the "development or transmogrification" of the Pragmatism of

* This article had been already begun when Mr. Peirce published the following passage in an article in the "Hibbert Journal," (Oct., 1908):

"In 1871, in a Metaphysical Club in Cambridge, Massachusetts, I used to preach this principle as a sort of logical gospel, representing the unformulated method followed by Berkeley, and in conversation about it I called it 'Pragmatism.' In December, 1877, and January, 1878, I set forth the doctrine in the 'Popular Science Monthly'; and the two parts of my essay were printed in French in the '*Revue Philosophique*,' vols. VI and VII. Of course, the doctrine attracted no particular attention, for, as I had remarked in my opening sentence, very few people care for logic. But in 1897 Professor James remodelled the matter, and transmogrified it into a doctrine of philosophy, some parts of which I highly approved, while other and more prominent parts I regarded, and still regard, as opposed to sound logic. About the time Professor Papirie discovered, to the delight of the Pragmatist school, that this doctrine was incapable of definition, which would certainly seem to distinguish it from every other doctrine in whatever branch of science, I was coming to the conclusion that my poor little maxim should be called by another name; and accordingly, in April, 1905, I renamed it 'Pragmaticism.' I had never before dignified it by any name in print, except that, at Professor Baldwin's request, I wrote a definition of it for his 'Dictionary of Psychology and Philosophy.' I did not insert the word in the 'Century Dictionary,' though I had charge of the philosophical definitions of that work; for I have a perhaps exaggerated dislike of *réclame*."

"How to Make Our Ideas Clear" into the Pragmatism of the Will-to-Believe and of the Making of Truth. And, while doing this, we shall incidentally afford the reader an example of the application of the Pragmatic method itself. Like Locke asking the meaning of "Human Identity," like Berkeley asking the meaning of "Matter," like Hume asking the meaning of "Causation," we humble people will, in our turn, ask the meaning of "Practical Difference," and test it by examining whether the attitude toward *opinion and truth* taken up by Mr. Peirce is the same attitude as that taken up toward *opinion and truth* by Professor James and Mr. Schiller, or whether the difference in the resulting attitude does not prove a corresponding difference between the "Pragmatic Principle" as intended by Mr. Peirce, and the "Pragmatic Principle" as employed by Mr. Peirce's ostensible disciples:

"Consider what effects, which might conceivably have practical bearings, we conceive the object of our conception to have. Then *our conception of these effects* [*italics mine*] *is the whole of our conception of the object.*" "A figment is the product of somebody's imagination; it has such characters as his thought impresses upon it (A). That whose characters are *independent of how you or I think* [*italics mine*] is an external reality." (A) "Thus we may define the real as that whose characters are *independent of what anybody may think them to be.*" (B) "These minds do not seem to believe that disputation is ever to cease; they seem to think that *the opinion which is natural for one man is not so for another*, and that belief will consequently never be settled. In contenting themselves with fixing their own opinion by a method which would lead another man to a different result, (A) *they betray their feeble hold of the conception of what truth is.* On the other hand, all the followers of science are fully persuaded that the processes of investigation, *if only pushed far enough, will give one certain solution to every question* to which they can be applied. . . . *Different minds may set out with the most antagonistic views*, but the progress of investigation carries them *by a force outside of themselves* to one and the same conclusion. (A) *This activity of thought by which we are carried, not where we wish, but to a fore-ordained goal, is like the operation of destiny.* No modification of the point of view taken, no selection of other facts for study, no natural bent of mind, can enable a man to escape the predestinate opinion. This great law is embodied in the conception of truth and reality.

(A) "The opinion which is fated to be *ultimately agreed to by all who investigate* is *what is meant by truth*, and the object represented in this opinion is the real. (A) That is the way I would explain reality." "But it may be said that this view is opposed to the abstract

definition which I have given of reality, inasmuch as it makes the character of the real to depend on what is ultimately thought about them. But the answer to this is that, on the other hand, reality is independent, not necessarily of thought in general, but only of what you or I or any finite number of men may think about it; and that, on the other hand, though the object of the final opinion depends on what that opinion is, yet (B) *what that opinion is* does not depend on what you or I or any man thinks." (C) "Our perversity and that of others may indefinitely postpone the settlement of opinion; it might even conceivably cause an arbitrary proposition to be universally accepted as long as the human race should last. Yet even that would not change the nature of the belief which could alone be the result of investigation carried sufficiently far; and if, after the extinction of our race, another should arise with faculties and dispositions for investigation, that true opinion must be the one which they would ultimately come to. Truth crushed to earth shall rise again, and *the opinion which would finally result from investigation does not depend on how anybody may actually think*" [italics mine]. "A person who arbitrarily chooses the proposition he will adopt can use the word 'truth' only to emphasize the expression of his determination to hold to his choice."*

These quotations from "How to Make Our Ideas Clear" (to which might be added others from the essays constituting the first and third instalments of the series "Illustrations of the Logic of Science") display Mr. Peirce's attitude of mind regarding the relations of "truth" with what Professor James calls our "willing nature"—and which it is convenient to call by his essay title "Will-to-Believe." The following quotations display the attitude on this subject of the two chief philosophers who have accepted Mr. Peirce's principle and name of Pragmatism. I letter both sets of quotations, in order to facilitate the comparison between them.

Schiller: "Studies in Humanism," page 18:

(B) "Two men, therefore, with different fortunes, histories and temperaments, *ought not* to arrive at the same metaphysic . . . each should react *individually* on the food for thought which his *personal life* affords, and the resulting differences *ought not* to be set aside as void of ultimate significance." (Italics in the original.)

Schiller: "Axioms as Postulates—Personal Idealism," page 59:

(A) "What we have seen to be untrue, viz.: that there is an objective world given independently of us and constraining us to recognize it."

* C. S. Peirce, "Illustration of the Logic of Science: II. How to Make Our Ideas Clear" ("Popular Science Monthly," New York, Appleton & Co., No. LXIX, January, 1878, pages 286 to 302).

Schiller: "Studies in Humanism," page 189:

(A) "He (the Pragmatist) thinks that the coerciveness of 'fact' has been enormously exaggerated by failure to observe that it is never sheer coercion but always mitigated by his acceptance."

Schiller: "Studies in Humanism," page 208:

(A) (Pragmatic truth) "is fluid, not rigid, temporal and temporary, not eternal and everlasting; *chosen, not inevitable*; born of passion and sprung (like Aphrodite) from a foaming sea of desires, not 'dispassionate' nor 'purely intellectual'; incomplete, not perfect; fallible, not inerrant; absorbed in the attaining of what is not yet achieved; purposive and struggling towards ends."

Schiller: "Axioms as Postulates—Personal Idealism," page 120:

(B) "What are these mechanical explanations which have so successfully occupied the fertile field of science? They are devices of our own . . . ideals conceived by our intelligence to which we are coaxing reality to approximate."

Schiller: "Studies in Humanism," page 12:

(C) ". . . The human reason is ever gloriously human . . . it mercifully interposes an impenetrable veil between us and any truth or reality which is wholly alien to our nature."

William James: "Pragmatism," page 273:

(B) "On pragmatic principles we cannot reject any hypothesis if consequences useful to life flow from it. Universal conceptions . . . have indeed no meaning and no reality if they have no use. But if they have any use, they have that amount of meaning, and the meaning will be true if the use squares well with life's other uses."

William James: "Pragmatism," page 76:

(B) "But in this world . . . certain ideas are not only agreeable to think about, or agreeable as supporting other ideas that we are fond of, but they are also helpful in life's practical struggles. If there be any life that it is really better we should lead, and if there be any idea which, believed in, would help us to lead that life, then it would be really better for us [*italics sic*] to believe in that idea, unless, indeed, belief in it incidentally clashed with other, greater vital benefits. (*Italics sic.*)

(B) "What would be better for us to believe! This sounds *very like a definition of truth*. [*Italics mine.*] It comes very near to saying what we ought [*italics sic*] to believe! And in that definition none of you would find any oddity. Ought we ever not to believe what it is better for us to believe? And can we then keep the notion of what is better

for us and what is *true for us* [italics mine] permanently apart? Pragmatism says no, and I fully agree with her!"

William James: "Pragmatism," page 204:

(A) "You can say of it either that: it is useful because it is true; or that it is true because it is useful. *True* is the name for whatever starts the verification process;* useful is the name for its completed function in experience."

William James: "Pragmatism," page 73:

(B) "If theological ideas prove to have a value for concrete life, they will be true, for pragmatism, in the sense that they are good for so much."

William James: "Pragmatism," page 299:

(A) "On pragmatic principles, if the hypothesis of God works satisfactorily in the widest sense of the word, it is true."

(B) "Now, whatever its residual difficulties may be, experience shows that it certainly does work and that the problem is . . . to determine it so that it will combine with all the other working truths."

William James: "Pragmatism," page 200:

(B) "Pragmatism asks its usual question: Grant an idea or a belief to be true, it says, what concrete difference will its being true make in any one's actual life?"

Schiller: "Humanism," page 260 *et seq.*:

(B) "In the end the world is human experience, and a world which we neither did nor could experience would not be one we need argue or trouble about.

"What would be our attitude towards the world in which the ultimate significance of our ideals was denied . . . and in which the hope of happiness was nothing but a delusion?"

Schiller: "Humanism," page 199 *et seq.*:

(B) "Knowledge is power, because we decline to recognize as knowledge whatever does not satisfy our lust for power."

"It follows that ultimate reality must be absolutely satisfactory."

(A) "There is a serious fallacy in the notion that the pursuit of truth could reveal a chamber of horrors in the innermost shrine. . . .

* C. S. Peirce: "How to Make Our Ideas Clear," page 289: ". . . the action of thought is excited by the irritation of doubt, and ceases when belief is attained; so that production of belief is the sole function of thought." This shows that for Peirce *doubt* "is the name of what starts the verification process"—*truth* what ends that process when it has been properly carried through. Note Professor James's implying that *we know truth* before embarking on the process of ascertaining it!

(B) "If this were true we should decline to believe it and to accept it as true. And even if we could be forced to the admission that the pursuit of truth necessarily and inevitably brought us face to face with some unbearable atrocity . . . [C] as soon as the pursuit of truth was generally recognized to be practically noxious, we should simply give it up."

(C) "If its misguided votaries persisted in their diabolical pursuit of truth regardless of the consequences, they would be stamped out as the Indian Government has stamped out the Thugs. . . . The thing has happened over and over again. All through the Middle Ages most branches of knowledge were under black suspicion as hostile to human welfare. They languished accordingly."

Schiller: "Axioms as Postulates—Personal Idealism," page 122:

(B) "There is no intelligibility without conformity to human nature, and human nature is teleological . . . A world which can be 'fully explained' but only in mechanical or barely intellectual terms, is *not* fully intelligible, is *not* fully explained."

"An intelligent reader may perhaps gather . . . why the personality of God should be esteemed an indispensable postulate. Is immortality a postulate? At present we are too profoundly ignorant as to what men actually desire in the matter, and why and how to decide what they ought to desire."

William James: "Pragmatism," concluding sentence:

(B) "Between the two extremes, of crude naturalism on the one hand and transcendental absolutism on the other, you may find that what I take the liberty of calling the pragmatistic or melioristic type of theism, is exactly *what you require*."

Such, then, is the attitude towards Truth and the Will-to-Believe of Mr. C. S. Peirce, and such the attitude of Messrs. James and Schiller. Applying in this case that selfsame method for "making our ideas clear" which bids us test the meaning of an idea by the results of that possible meaning, we see that the Pragmatic Principle involved by Messrs. James and Schiller must differ from the Pragmatic Principle formulated by Mr. Peirce, inasmuch as the consequences not only deducible but actually deduced from the one, are in flagrant contradiction with the consequences deduced from the other. The contradiction amounts to this, that while Mr. Peirce makes *truth* into an intellectual imperative which sooner or later imposes itself (or would impose itself but for human "perversity") on *opinion*, Messrs. James and Schiller (besides constantly confusing "Truth" with

its objective co-relate "Reality") calmly identify *truth* with *belief*, and *belief* with *opinion*, and they test *truth* (which is itself belief's and opinion's standard) by the beneficial or agreeable, the useful consequences due to holding a given belief or opinion. The contradiction between the two attitudes toward truth can be *practically* tested by substituting the word "opinion" for the word "truth" in the quotations severally from Mr. Peirce and from his self-styled disciples. In the quotations from Mr. Peirce, this substitution results in nonsense: no one could mean that "opinion" [in original "truth"] "is that whose characters are independent of what anybody may think them to be," nor that "opinion" ["truth"] "is the fore-ordained conclusion of scientific investigation if pushed far enough"; nor that "opinion" ["truth"] "is produced by a force outside of ourselves and similar to destiny"; still less that "opinion" ["truth"] "crushed to earth shall rise again independent of what any one thinks," even if it have to await the coming of another race of human beings; least of all, that we may expect unanimity of "opinion" ["truth"] from individuals starting with different bias, character and methods. It is obvious, therefore, that, when Mr. Peirce speaks of *truth*, he does not mean the same thing as *opinion*.

But, if we perform this little experiment upon the quotations from Messrs James and Schiller, we shall find ourselves in front of a totally different "practical result."

So far from turning the sentences into nonsense, the substitution of "opinion" for "truth" will make them not only clear and reasonable, but frequently truistic and platitudinous: two individuals may, indeed, be expected to arrive at *opinions* as different as their lives and fortunes. Acceptance of an opinion is certainly different from coercion by fact. *Opinion* may, indeed, be "chosen, not inevitable" "temporary, not eternal"; "fluid, not rigid"; "passionate," not unbiassed; nor could anything be more appropriate than Mr. Schiller's simile of *opinion* rising, like Aphrodite, "out of a foaming sea of desire." We can all think of cases when human reason's "glorious humanness" has interposed a veil, merciful or otherwise, between mankind and *opinions* "alien to its nature"; and history does show (as Mr. Peirce remarks in the first of his articles on the "Logic of Science") no end of violent repressions of *opinions* which were deemed danger-

ous or odious. Professor James would be not less logical, but a deal more so, if he said that it is *opinion* which "starts the verification-process"; more logical, because that verification-process results in a *truth* which sometimes dispels an *opinion*. People much less subtle than Mr. Schiller have talked of "*making up their minds*," or "*making themselves an opinion*"; and no one, subtle or not, would deny that many *opinions* are *purposive*. And, finally, this very fluid, temporal, temporary, individual, biassed, passionate, human-made (even officially made) thing, *opinion*, can be arranged, tested, accepted, welcomed, scouted, anathematized, on the score of being or not being useful, beneficent, conducive to life. For instance, basing ourselves on Lafcadio Hearn, we might quite admit that the *opinions* summed up under the title "Ancestor-Worship" had been (to quote Professor James's rather commercial phrase of recommendation) "exactly what was required" by the former inhabitants of Japan; but few of us would be ready to describe those "Ancestor-worship" opinions as "independent of what any one thought," and "fore-ordained to be ultimately arrived at by investigators despite all individual and temporary bias," as Mr. Peirce describes *truth*. For, so far from *opinion* being identifiable with *truth*, it frequently happens that an *opinion* may be extremely efficacious, practically and morally, and yet, on the contrary, *false*.

Now, it is exactly because *opinion*, while possessing all the characteristics attributed by Messrs. James and Schiller to *truth*, by no means always answers to Mr. Peirce's definition of *truth*, that we must set our face against the identification, even against the partial confusion of *opinion* with *truth*: the two words must be kept separate because they answer to separate, to occasionally overlapping but by no means equivalent, notions. And the tendencies leading to this identification of truth and opinion, leading to this testing truth by practical, moral, extrinsic value, are tendencies requiring to be checked, not because they exist in distinguished thinkers like Messrs. James and Schiller, but because they exist in all of us, and are such that all philosophy is not too much to keep them in order.

The "Will-to-Believe," the "consent of our willing nature," the "purposive making of truth" are labels for human instincts as universal as the instincts bidding us seek pleasure, repose and advantage wherever they can be got, and without consideration

for the pleasure, the repose, the advantage of other beings. Most of our thoughts, and probably the whole of our faculty for thinking, have arisen at the bidding of an interested purpose of a self-seeking will; and this accounts for many of the absurdities that have been thought, and perhaps for most of the vices of our methods of thinking. But, thanks to the pressure of universal and averaged purposes and interests upon individuals, thanks to the conflict of *opinions*, of *purposively made truths* and of *beliefs which are willed*, there has been evolved in our thinking nature a check, a counteracting force, to those interested motives and emotional preferences without which there would have been no thinking faculty at all. That check is the particular thing defined by Mr. Peirce as *truth*. That counteracting force is constituted by the taste, the passion, the instinctive and imperious respect for truth, which plays in our intellectual life the part played in our individual and social life by the instincts of justice and chastity. In the same way that our life as human beings would be laid waste without these other two great altruistic instincts, so also, were it not for the passion for truth, our intellectual life would have been perpetually jeopardized by the natural tendency to believe (or pretend to believe) whatsoever appeals to individual or momentary interests and preferences. Mankind has always wanted, perhaps always required, and certainly always made itself, a stock of delusions and sophisms, of *vital lies* or of *white lies*. Every human being's thought, consciously or unconsciously, tends to accommodate itself to some wish, some use, some habit. Every opinion tends to identify itself with truth. The *Will-to-Believe*, the purposive making of truth, are unceasingly at work. This is the reason why we have no use for the kind of Pragmatism which teaches the testing of truth by its utility, the identification of truth with opinion, which preaches this universal and ineradicable vice of all thinking on a self-assertive virtue.

VERNON LEE.